

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 4, 2002

ELLENVILLE SCRAP PLACED ON SUPERFUND PRIORITY LIST

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that the Ellenville Scrap Iron and Metal site is being placed on the National Priority List (NPL) of hazardous sites. Hinchey, believing the site to be heavily contaminated, has prodded government agencies into looking more carefully at the site since being contacted by area residents in 1997. The listing is a necessary step toward federal cleanup of the site.

"Today's announcement is evidence that persistence pays off," said Hinchey. "The neighbors who contacted me and who have worked on this for so long are the ones who deserve the real credit. Now we have to make sure the administration follows through with the cleanup."

Hinchey was contacted in December 1997 by constituents who live near the scrap yard. Early in 1998 he repeatedly urged the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to more thoroughly test for contamination at the site and requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) investigate. The DEC subsequently closed the scrap yard down and EPA conducted its own tests, finding significant contamination including PCBs and heavy metals. In September 2001, EPA proposed that Ellenville Scrap Iron and Metal be included on the NPL. That proposal started a 60-day public comment period, followed by additional review by EPA.

Considering the local public demand for remediating the site, and the concurrence of the state and local governments, the listing would normally have been a foregone conclusion. But a severe slowdown on the part of the Bush Administration in adding sites to the NPL raised doubts. Hinchey suspected that the administration, not wanting to see the number of unremediated sites on the NPL grow larger, would continue to delay new listings or simply decline to make them. In March he joined several of his colleagues in writing to EPA to express concern over the slowdown and held a press conference to call on the administration to move forward with the Ellenville scrap cleanup.

"Without Maurice Hinchey, we would not have achieved what we have achieved," said Maxine Chapin, who lives near the site. "It is with deep gratitude we thank him. He really works for the people he represents."

Roy Leland, another neighbor, added, "It's been a long time coming. There's still a long road ahead of us but this is a big step."

-more-

Congressman Maurice Hinchey

September 4, 2002

Page Two

The NPL is a list of the most contaminated sites in the United States. The list is required under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), which was enacted in 1980 and is commonly known as the Superfund law. The NPL contains only the highest priority sites that are eligible to receive federal funding for cleanup.